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EDWARD GRIFFIN BECKWITH

At the services Sunday evening at
Central Union church the following ad-
dress in memory of the late Dr. Ed-
ward Griffin Beckwith by Dr. N. B.
Emerson was delivered:

Our coming here today is not as
mourning. I do not stand here to
utter words of eulogy—a star needs no
eulogy. I would rather invite you to
join with me in an effort to appreciate
the life and work of the good man who
has gone from our midst—an appreciation
directed specially to his character
as a teacher at Punahou. And if
these remarks seem strangely tinged
with personality, you will please re-
member there are others in this audi-
ence who have shared the experiences
I shall mention, and have felt the
stimulus of Mr. Beckwith's personality
as a teacher, and as a man, and who
would not shrink, as I do not, to speak
of him in the garb of the first person.

At the birth of Punahou School, in
1841, the right man to take charge of
it and to be its principal was found
in the person of Rev. Daniel Dole, of
hallowed memory, who had but then
arrived from the United States. When,
in 1854, this child of his nurture had
outgrown its short clothes and was ex-
changing its childish girdle for the
bone and sinew of early youth—when,
in fact, it was found necessary to
broaden and strengthen the educa-
tional scheme of Punahou School, in order
to meet growing educational demands
of this community—the right man to
fill the place of the first president of
Oahu College was found at hand in
the person of Edward Griffin Beck-
with.

Mr. Beckwith was at that time no
stranger to this community. The few
years of his principalship at the head
of the Royal School had distinguished
him in the eyes of all—of pupils and
of parents alike—as a teacher of ex-
ceptionally high quality. He was felt
to be a "born teacher." I well re-
member the feeling, almost of envy,
with which some of us—loyal students
and partisans of Punahou, every one
of us—regarded from afar the good
fortune of those who had been privi-
leged with his tuition at the Royal
School—an envy which was turned
into a feeling of self-gratulation when
it was ordained that the benefits of
Mr. Beckwith's tuition were to be
ours. This feeling of self-gratulation,
however, was not unmingled with a
feeling of solicitude, almost amounting
to apprehension or fear, lest we were
to have over us a taskmaster, a dis-
ciplinarian, a martinet, who would
draw the reins so tightly and force our
speed at such a pace as to discourage
some of us feeble folk.

This fear was not realized. As a
teacher Mr. Beckwith was a discipli-
narian of approved strictness, but also
of approved savoir faire and insight
into human nature; of such generos-
ity, large-heartedness, kindness and
sympathy, that respect and love took
the place of fear. Mr. Beckwith's
coming to Punahou acted on the pupils
of the Royal School like a displace-
ment of the center of gravity, and
many of them transferred their alle-
giance to Punahou.

It has never been my fortune to be
instructed by, or to meet, a teacher
who in the classroom was more alert,
more in command of all his faculties,
than Mr. Beckwith. His mental opera-
tions seemed to have the quickness
of instinct; and yet, at the same time,
his patience with those of slower men-
tal gait than himself displayed no lack
of gentleness and toleration. It was
one of Mr. Beckwith's maxims that
one did not really understand a propo-
sition until he could state it in clear
language. His own ideas were clear
and distinct, and his teaching was
eminently fitted to cultivate in his
pupils clearness of thought and of ex-
pression. This characteristic of his
mind was well illustrated in his care-
ful training of the whole school in
orthography. It was not his custom to sit
while teaching; he always stood or
walked. His mind was so wide-awake
that he could not sit still.

His many-sidedness showed itself
not only in his ability as a teacher
of the humanities and the sciences, as
they were then unfolded, but in his
wonderful ability to weld the voices
of the whole school into a very re-
spectable chorus, as well as in his tal-

ent as a teacher of map-making—in
connection with the teaching of geo-
graphy—and in drawing. Let me add
that his versatility was to be seen also
in his mastery of the fine art of de-
coration, whether in making a bouquet,
in laying out a garden, or in turning
his hand—when need was—to the prepa-
ration of some toothsome culinary
production. In all of these matters he
was proficient.

One of Mr. Beckwith's strong points
as a teacher was shown in his atten-
tion to what we then called "compo-
sition-writing." We did not then use
the word theme. His ideas of style
were founded on a study of some of
the best models of English literature;
and this leads to the mention of his
class in English literature, the recita-
tions in which—held in the room of
general assembly—as I remember,
were listened to with a hungry long-
ing, and were felt to be an inspiration
and a stimulus, by many who were not
privileged to be members of that class.

Mr. Beckwith had the gift of what
I would call oratory in no small de-
gree; and it was one of his aims to
cultivate this talent and to develop it
in his pupils; not the mere studied ut-
terance of sentences for sensational
effect. His aim was higher than this,
to lead the speaker to think while on
his legs, to make the words and
thoughts of the declamation his own.
For this purpose he instituted the prac-
tice of requiring—from those who vol-
unteered—the presentation of occa-
sional original orations on themes
chosen by the speakers. He even went
so far as to encourage extemporaneous
speaking on the stage on each Friday
afternoon.

It was due to his stimulus, if I mis-
take not, that the Philologist Debating
Society was organized and started on
a career of great usefulness. I well
remember the evening when he came
before us and after a short, but in-
spiring, address on the methods and
purpose of debate and argument, in
which he kindly warned us against the
arts of sophistry that would make the
worse appear the better reason, show-
ing us the true way of linking to-
gether argument and illustration in
such a manner as to set forth the
truth, and then left us to ourselves.
His own Sunday evening discourses on
Biblical themes were admirable illus-
trations of his method of thought.
They were not exclusively argumenta-
tive and, were, as I remember them, in
but a slight degree doctrinal. They
were always mainly Christian appeals
to the spirit and the understanding;
at the same time he did not find it
unworthy of the day or of his purpose
to lead us in imagination through
Nebuchadnezzar's hanging gardens to
show us the walls of Babylon, or to
lead us with the children of Israel on
their march through the desert.

Outside the schoolroom Mr. Beck-
with was always a lovable companion,
and he often made himself the leader
in the sports of the playground; and it
was he who introduced a new spirit
into the popular game of baseball, in-
fusing into it more strenuous and more
scientific methods. He also was the
introducer of the now much disused
but worthy game of cricket. Those
were the days when two hours of daily
work with hoe and spade in the field
were required of each pupil who board-
ed at Punahou. Those hours often
found Mr. Beckwith with us. He was
a farmer's son, and he never lost his
love of the soil and everything that
springs from it. In our expeditions
into the woods he was often one of us.
Time would fail to tell of his wise
guidance of the famous expedition
that went to view the Mauna Loa erup-
tion of 1859, in which he played the
part not only of chaplain but Nestor
of the expedition.

Mr. Beckwith was an apostle of cul-
ture in the noblest sense of the word.
He had a high sense of the beauty and
dignity of a well-ordered life. Though
nurtured in a strict creed, he was keen-
ly alive at every portal of sense to the
wonder and beauty of nature as mani-
fested in these islands, which were to
him a second home.

In closing these remarks, I can not
do better than to quote from an ad-
dress delivered by him in Honolulu
before the trustees and friends of
Oahu College in 1884, forty years after
the granting of the charter of incor-
poration to Oahu College:

"There is no land anywhere more
favorable than this for the develop-
ment of the best physical life. For
freedom from the malarial that weaken
and waste us; for the salubrious that
favors unceasing growth every day of
every year from birth to maturity; for
immunity from the cold that dwarfs
and the heat that dissolves us; for a
climate that invites to the only ratio-
nal regimen of life—that is, life out
in the open air and the sunlight; for a
temperature that favors just that
measure of activity that keeps men
soundest of heart and supplest of limb;
and for that quiet beauty of land and
sea and sky that fills the soul with the
serenest peace and tends to the most
healthful content, I have never seen
any other land like this little mid-
ocean kingdom. And so, here you
ought to grow the finest sons and the
fairest daughters that can be found
out of paradise. And you will, if you
fulfill the condition. What is the con-
dition? A physical culture that aims
at a perfected physical manhood; a
system of training of your boys and
girls from their early childhood;
plenty of healthful activity out in the
open air and the sunlight; never an ex-
cessive activity, but always enough
every day to stir the blood, to round
the muscles, to bronze the face, to
broaden the lungs and open them wide
to these mid-ocean winds. That is the
way of life; a fine physical culture with
a view to a vigorous physical manhood.
It can not be had in any land without
it. And the peculiar peril of this
sunny land is that you will neglect it.
With no rigor of wintry winds to put
you under compulsion of a healthful
activity, the danger is in the direction
of a luxurious ease, that would make
men limpy, and languid, and lugubri-
ous in any climate. And because
that is your peril you must guard
against it vigilantly. So I counsel to
give this matter of physical culture a
large place in your college regimen."

If Mr. Beckwith was a born teacher,
it might also be said that he was a
born preacher in the best sense of that
word. Of his success in that capacity
I must leave to another to speak.

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